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--BULLETIN--

U.S. ALERT (TOPS 4)

WASHINGTON (AP)--DEFENSE SECRETARY JAMES R. SCHLESINGER SAID TODAY HE HAS BEGUN A GRADUAL PHASE-DOWN OF THE AMERICAN MILITARY ALERT CALLED TO WARN THE SOVIET UNION TO KEEP ITS TROOPS OUT OF THE MIDDLE EAST.

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WASHINGTON--ADD U.S. ALERT (54)

HE SAID BECAUSE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF SOVIET PARATROOPERS MAY STILL BE ON THEIR OWN ALERT, THE AMERICAN RETURN TO ROUTINE MILITARY STATUS MAY BE SLOW.

INITIALLY, SCHLESINGER SAID A TINY AMERICAN MILITARY COMMAND HEADQUARTERED IN PANAMA AND RESPONSIBLE FOR A SMALL NUMBER OF TROOPS IN THE CARIBBEAN AREA WOULD RETURN TO NORMAL.

AT A NEWS CONFERENCE, SCHLESINGER SAID MANY OF THE SOVIET MILITARY ACTIONS CITED AS THE REASON FOR THE AMERICAN ALERT HAD BEEN KNOWN FOR SEVERAL DAYS. HE SAID THE MAJOR REASON FOR CALLING THE U.S. ALERT WAS DIPLOMATIC, BUT DECLINED TO ELABORATE.

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